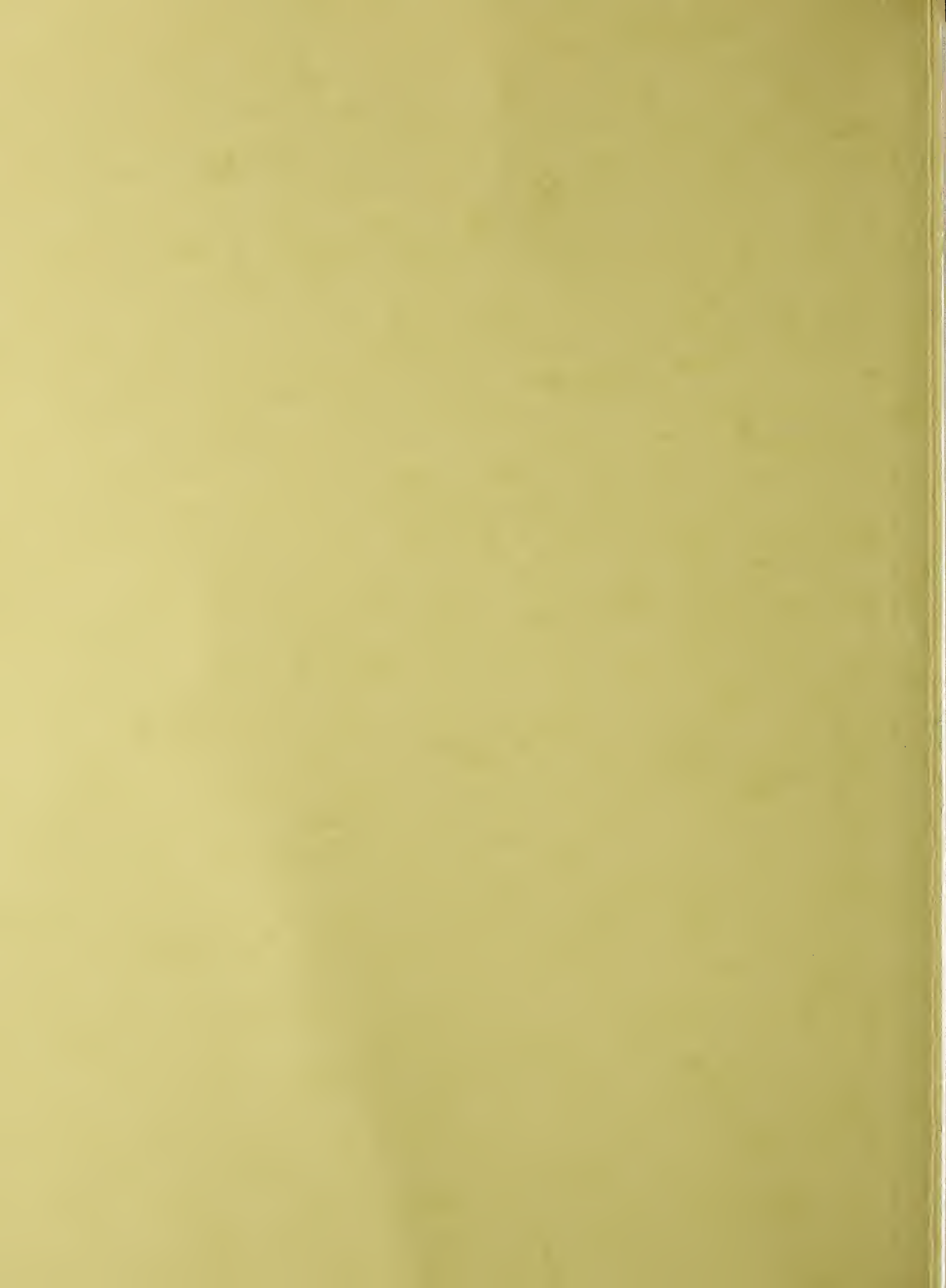


Contents of Lincoln's
Pockets

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Contents of Lincoln's Pockets

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

April 11, 1960

Hon. George A. Dondero
518 Washington Square Bldg.
Royal Oak, Michigan

Dear Mr. Dondero:

I recall that while I was at Lincoln Memorial University you sent us a list of the items that were in Abraham Lincoln's pocket when he was assassinated.

Would you be so kind to send me such a list to place in our files at the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

I hope you can visit our Foundation once we move into our new quarters on the first floor of the home office of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw

GEORGE A. DONDERO

PRESIDENT

THOMAS I. STARR

HONORARY PRESIDENT

W. E. C. HUTHWAITE

VICE-PRESIDENT



LLOYD C. NYMAN

SECRETARY-TREASURER

951 SO. OXFORD ROAD

GROSSE POINTE WOODS 36, MICH.

CIVIL WAR

ROUND TABLE

518 Washington Square Bldg.
Royal Oak, Michigan
April 13, 1960

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear friend McMurtry:

I have your letter of the 11th in reference to the list of items taken from the pockets of Abraham Lincoln when he was assassinated.

Enclosed herewith is the list, but I want you to know that I have given my word of honor to the Congressional Library in Washington that this list would not be advertised or published in any paper. I ask you to comply with this. The reason is that when Mrs. Mary Isham, granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln, deposited these items with the Congressional Library, she left a letter in which she requested that no one be permitted to see these items unless they had some legal right to do so. I tell you this all in confidence.

I have seen these articles and have had the privilege of examining them.

I was glad to hear from you. Hope all is well with you in your new position.

Kindest personal regards,

George A. Dondero

GAD:bw

Enc.

List of contents of President Lincoln's pockets on the night of April 14th, 1865, deposited by Mrs. Charles Isham on October 27, 1937, and kept in the Librarian's safe.

(N.B.: No publicity is to be given to the fact that the Library possesses these articles and the list is not to be communicated without the authorization of the Librarian.)

- 1 pen knife
- 1 leather spectacle case with spectacles
- 1 silver spectacle case with folding spectacles
- 1 watch charm
- 1 spectacle lens cleanser
- 1 cuff link with monogram "L"
- 1 white linen handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" embroidered in the corner
- 1 pocketbook containing a \$5.00 Confederate note

Clippings:

Dissatisfaction among Southern Soldiers

John Bright on the Presidency

President Lincoln (editorial on an address by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, of Philadelphia)

The message of the Governor of Missouri

A Conscript's Epistle to Jefferson Davis

Emancipation in Missouri

Sherman's order for his march - Special Field Order No. 120, Headquarters, Military Division of the Mississippi, in the field, Kingston, Georgia, November 9, 1864

President Lincoln's letter to Mr. Hackett

The Two Platforms - Lincoln and Johnson

April 18, 1960

Hon. George A. Dondero
518 Washington Square Bldg.
Royal Oak, Michigan

Dear Mr. Dondero:

I was pleased to have your letter of April 13th enclosing a list of the contents of President Lincoln's pockets on the night of April 14, 1865.

You can be assured that no publicity will be given to this list of items. I will keep the list in our files marked "Confidential".

You were most kind to provide us with this information.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw

P.S. I am at a loss to understand why Mrs. Mary Isham would want these relics kept secret and that no publicity be given to them. There seems to be nothing of a controversial nature in the list.

GEORGE A. DONDERO
CHAIRMAN

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

518 Washington Square Building
Royal Oak, Michigan
April 20, 1960

Dear Gerald:

Your letter of the 18th has been received in reference to the list of items I sent to you.

The information that I received as to why the Lincoln heirs did not want the public to know of the items found in the President's pockets is this; and it may not be the real reason, but I know of no other reason. I think it was vain pride on their part, because they did not want the American people to know what a President took to the theater with him and especially to find in his pockets a broken handled six-blade jackknife.

This is the only answer I can give you, and I am writing this to you in confidence.

Kindest regards,



George A. Dondero

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

April 21, 1960

Hon. George A. Dondero
518 Washington Square Building
Royal Oak, Michigan

Dear Mr. Dondero:

I have your letter of April 20th and I want to thank you for your explanation as to why the contents of Lincoln's pockets (April 14, 1865) have been kept a secret. I think your explanation is logical. I did not realize that Lincoln's knife was "a broken handled six blade jackknife".

Again I will state, I will keep this information confidential.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:hw



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<http://archive.org/details/assassinationxx00linc>



Lincoln Lore

March, 1977

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation...Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1669

The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets at Ford's Theatre

On February 12, 1976, the Library of Congress revealed the contents of the "mystery box" containing the contents of Abraham Lincoln's pockets the night he was assassinated. The dramatic timing of the announcement — on Lincoln's birthday in the nation's bicentennial year — led to its being widely noted in the press. All over the nation people read that Lincoln had carried a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles engraved by their donor Ward Hill Lamon, another pair of folding spectacles in a silver case, an ivory pocket knife, a fancy watch fob, a large white Irish linen handkerchief with his name embroidered on it in red cross-stitch, an initialed sleeve button, and a brown leather wallet. The wallet proved to con-

tain probably the most startling item, a five-dollar Confederate note, and nine old newspaper clippings. The newspaper clippings were dismissed in the news releases with little comment beyond saying that the President could perhaps be forgiven for the minor vanity of carrying old adulatroy news items in his pockets.

None of the accounts of the opening which I read — and I read several because I happened to be travelling across the country at the time and saw several different newspapers — bothered to recount even the titles of the articles from Lincoln's wallet. Curiosity was too much to bear, and I wrote the Library of Congress to find out what the articles said. They



DON'T SWAP HORSES.

JOHN BULL. "Why don't you ride the other Horse a bit? He's the best Animal."

BROTHER JONATHAN. "Well, that may be; but the fact is, OLD ANE is just where I can put my finger on him; and as for the other—though they say he's some when out in the scrub yonder—I never know where to find him."

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. John Bright was of a different mind, but most Americans assumed that most Englishmen, like John Bull in this 1864 cartoon from *Harper's Weekly*, supported McClellan rather than Lincoln in the election of 1864.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 2. Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) was probably the most conspicuous clergyman of his day.

were able to produce photographs of seven of the articles; two are in too poor shape to be taken to the photographer, apparently.

I was glad I wrote when I received the photographs. Contrary to what I had been led to believe by the press coverage, only two of the articles were merely pieces of praise for the President. The other five, though they were not critical, dealt essentially with other subjects. Presumably, we may interpret these articles as indications of some of the problems which engaged the President during the last year of his administration. It would be wrong to place too much emphasis upon them just because Lincoln retained them so long (none of the clippings was from a newspaper printed immediately before the assassination). He was a man of notoriously disorderly habits whose office filing system as a lawyer had consisted of a bundle of legal papers tied together with a note written by Lincoln, "If you can't find it anywhere else look in here." Still, he showed enough initial interest to clip the articles or at least to retain them in his wallet once given them by others.

It is interesting to note the sort of praise which the President valued. Two of the clippings contained nothing but praise, it is true, but the praise came from two quarters where Lincoln had not proven popular in the past. An account of Henry Ward Beecher's address at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia told "how strong a hold the President has upon the popular heart throughout the loyal North." Beecher had written a series of editorials in 1862 which were, from his own recollection, "in the nature of a mowing-machine — they cut at every revolution — and I was told one day that the President had received them and read them through with very serious countenance, and that his only criticism was: 'Is thy servant a dog?' They bore down on him very hard." Things were very different in 1864, and Beecher told his Philadelphia audience that Lincoln's prosecution of the war had been effec-

tive. When an incidental mention of Andrew Jackson seemed to bring forth audience interest, Beecher exploited his opening by saying, "Abraham Lincoln may be a great deal less testy and wilful than Andrew Jackson, but in a long race, I do not know but that he will be equal to him." This was followed by a "storm of applause" which "seemed as if it never would cease." Philadelphia would go for Lincoln in the election of 1864, but Beecher had sensed the campaign strategy which would work in this negrophobic home of General McClellan. The stress would have to be put on Lincoln's Jacksonian qualities as a stern and uncompromising foe of separatism. The election would not be a referendum on the popularity of emancipation and the Republican platform's commitment to the Thirteenth Amendment — if it could be avoided.

A large photograph of John Bright, the British liberal, hung in the anteroom of Lincoln's office in the White House. Doubtless, the President was gratified to read the clipping about "John Bright on the Presidency." In a letter written to Horace Greeley before the election of 1864, Bright observed that "those of my countrymen who have wished well to the rebellion, who have hoped for the break-up of your Union, who have preferred to see a Southern Slave Empire rather than a restored and free Republic, . . . are now in favor of the election of Gen. McClellan." On the other hand, "those who have deplored the calamities which the leaders of secession have brought upon your country, who believe that Slavery weakens your power and tarnishes your good name throughout the world, and who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired and prayed for by all good men, . . . are heartily longing for the re-election of Mr. Lincoln." Lincoln's election would prove that republican countries could survive "through the most desperate perils."

Lincoln seems to have been taking a keen interest in the state of Confederate morale. Two of the clippings dealt with this subject. Both carried the news that disaffection among the Confederate soldiers was high. "The Disaffection Among the Southern Soldiers" republished a letter from the *Toledo Blade* which had been "picked up in the streets of Brandon, Mississippi, by Captain Dinnis, of the 62nd Ohio Regiment." Dated July 16, 1863, the letter complained of "the vacillating policy and hollow promises" by which the soldiers had been "duped so long." With no provisions prepared along the route of retreat, the army was moving slowly. The Confederates paroled at Vicksburg were deserting. "The negro emancipation policy," the letter continued, "at which we so long hooted, is the most potent lever of our overthrow. It steals upon us unawares, and ere we can do anything the plantations are deserted, families without servants, camps without necessary attendants, women and children in want and misery. In short, the disadvantages to us now arising from the negroes are tenfold greater than have been all the advantages derived from earlier in the war." Certainly, this was welcome vindication of Lincoln's policy of emancipation, which had been justified precisely on the grounds that it would weaken the Southern war effort.

"A Conscript's Epistle to Jeff. Davis" shows the President's interests in rather a different light. This article also purported to reprint a captured Confederate letter, but the letter was much more satirical in tone and surely spoke in part at least to Lincoln's love for rough humor. Addressing the Confederate President as "Jeff., Red Jacket of the Gulf, and Chief of the Six Nations," one Norman Harold of Ashe County, North Carolina, expressed his desire to desert the "adored trinity" of the Confederacy, "cotton, niggers, and chivalry." He denounced Davis in mock-monarchical-reverence as the "Czar of all Chivalry and Khan of Cotton Tartary," as "the illegitimate son of a Kentucky horse-thief," and as the "bastard President of a political abortion." In the end he expressed the "exquisite joy" which the soldiers would express when Davis "shall have reached that eminent meridian whence all progress is perpendicular." Surely Lincoln found in all this exaggerated bombast some gratification that his Confederate counterpart would bear the burden of outrageous vilification that Lincoln himself had on occasion to bear. Here were the same accusations of monarchical pretensions. And here were the same doubts of proper Kentucky paternity. It must have been reassuring to find that this was the token of partisan discontent and not the result of reasoned and careful

research into the biographical backgrounds of Presidents.

Lincoln also carried with him "Sherman's Orders For His March," a straightforward reprinting of the military commander's outline for his campaign. Lincoln must have realized the great importance of these orders, which constituted the beginnings of a new era in military history. General Sherman carefully instructed his army that there would be "no general trains of supplies," but each regiment would have only "one wagon and one ambulance." Each brigade would have behind it "a due proportion of ammunition wagons, provision wagons and ambulances," but the army was obviously going to travel light, for they were to "start habitually at seven a. m., and make about fifteen miles per day." To do this, the general said, the "army will forage liberally on the country during the march. To this end, each brigade commander will organize a good and sufficient foraging party, under the command of one or more discreet officers, who will gather near the route traveled corn or forage of any kind, meat of any kind, vegetables, corn meal, or whatever is needed by the command; aiming at all times to keep in the wagon trains at least ten days provisions for the command and three days forage." Sherman enjoined certain restraints upon his men: "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants or commit any trespass; during the halt or a camp they may be permitted to gather turnips, potatoes and other vegetables, and drive in stock in front of their camps. To regular foraging parties must be entrusted the gathering of provisions and forage at any distance from the road traveled." Nevertheless, Sherman directly ordered the wholesale destruction of economically useful property in hostile districts:

V. To army corps commanders is entrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton gins, &c., and for them this general principle is laid down: In districts and neighborhoods where the army is unmolested, no destruction of such property should be permitted; but should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army corps commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of such hostility.

Sherman's orders even embodied a political interpretation of the nature of the conflict when they allowed the cavalry and artillery to "appropriate freely and without limit" the horses, mules, and wagons of the inhabitants — "discriminating, however, between the rich, who are usually hostile, and the poor or industrious, usually neutral or friendly." Again, he urged restraint. "In all foraging," he said, "of whatever kind, the parties engaged will refrain from abusive or threatening language, and may when the officer in command thinks proper, give written certificates of the facts, but no receipts; and they will endeavor to leave with each family a reasonable portion for their maintenance." There was no sentimentality in his provisions for coping with live contraband: "Negroes who are able-bodied and can be of service to the several columns, may be taken along; but each army commander will bear in mind that the question of supplies is a very important one, and that his first duty is to see to those who bear arms." Clearly, President Lincoln understood the nature of Sherman's epoch-making campaign well and did more than fret over whether the general would be cut off and surrounded by his bold move.

Even as late as 1864, President Lincoln remained preoccupied with the problems of the Border States and, in particular, of Missouri. Two of the clippings dealt with Missouri. "The Message of the Governor of Missouri" defended Governor Hamilton R. Gamble from charges of "copperheadism or disloyalty." Not only did his message pledge him "to support the Government with all our energies in its endeavors to suppress the rebellion in other States," but he also accepted a recent Ordinance of Emancipation "as a measure that will, in a brief period, accomplish the great object to be attained in making Missouri A FREE STATE." He also encouraged the emigration of free laborers from Europe. "If Governor GAMBLE were a Kentuckian," the newspaper remarked, "we should think him a very sound Union man. We do not know but he would be charged with being an 'Abolitionist.'" This article contained some praise for the President, because it condemned radicals who charged him with deserting the cause of

freedom for not giving in to "demands of the radicals that seemed intolerant and obtrusive." The article concluded: "The charge is unfounded and absurd. Doubtless he would rejoice as heartily as any radical, at the speedy abolition of slavery in Missouri, but he is not disposed to encourage excesses that might damage the good cause itself."

Some of the reasons for the dispute over emancipation policy in Missouri are readily apparent in another clipping from Lincoln's wallet, "Emancipation in Missouri." This article simply printed the Ordinance of Emancipation passed by the Missouri State Convention. Slavery was to end in Missouri on July 4, 1870. On that day all slaves in the state were to be free, "Provided, however, that all persons emancipated by this ordinance shall remain under the control and be subject to their late owners, or their legal representatives, as servants during the following period, to wit: Those over forty years of age, for and during their lives; those under twelve until they arrive at the age of twenty-three; and those of all other ages until the 4th of July, 1876." "Apprenticeship" was the term which was used to describe the nature of the proposed relationship between Missouri's "freedmen" and their "former" masters. However, we sometimes forget how limited a form of freedom apprenticeships can be because we use the term "apprentice" today to mean little more than "understudy." The Missouri Ordinance of Emancipation drew a good deal harsher picture: "The persons, or their legal representatives, who, up to the moment of emancipation, were owners of slaves hereby freed, shall, during the period for which the services of such freedmen are reserved to them, have the same authority and control over the said freedmen for the purpose of receiving the possessions and services of the same that are now held by the masters in respect of his slaves; provided, however, that after the said 4th of July, 1870, no person so held to service shall be sold to non-residents or removed from the state by authority of his late owner or his legal representative." In fact, then, those forty years old and above forever, children until the age of twenty-three, and everyone for at least six



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 3. John Bright (1811-1889) was a British liberal whose letters to Charles Sumner were read to President Lincoln.

years after 1870, would be serfs who could not earn the product of the sweat of their brows and whose only rights were (1) the right not to be sold to non-Missourians and (2) the right not to be removed from Missouri by their masters.

The Ordinance of Emancipation was basically Governor Gamble's plan. It was opposed by more radical Missourians who were called "Charcoals" for obvious reasons. Gamble led the opposing "Claybank" faction, so called because they were supposedly the occupants of colorless middle ground on the hot political question of slavery. Though there were some who were more conservative than Gamble — "Snowflakes," who thought slavery could somehow survive the war in Missouri, and Frank Blair, who still longed for the impossible dream of colonization, Gamble's was the conservative faction in Missouri politics at this time. It was little wonder that radical critics found his emancipation plan less than satisfactory, for it offered freedom to no one in less than twelve years from the date of the Ordinance (1864). Charcoals, though they preferred January 1, 1864

as the date of emancipation, were willing to settle for November 1, 1866. In the end, the political situation changed in Missouri, and slavery was abolished in the state in January of 1865.

Although it is true that none of the clippings was critical of President Lincoln and that all could be construed in some way as praise for him or as testimony to the success of his policies, it seems inadequate to dismiss these interesting clippings as the tokens and badges of a harmless Presidential vanity. The contents of these articles can help to illuminate the preoccupations of the mind of one of America's least confiding Presidents.

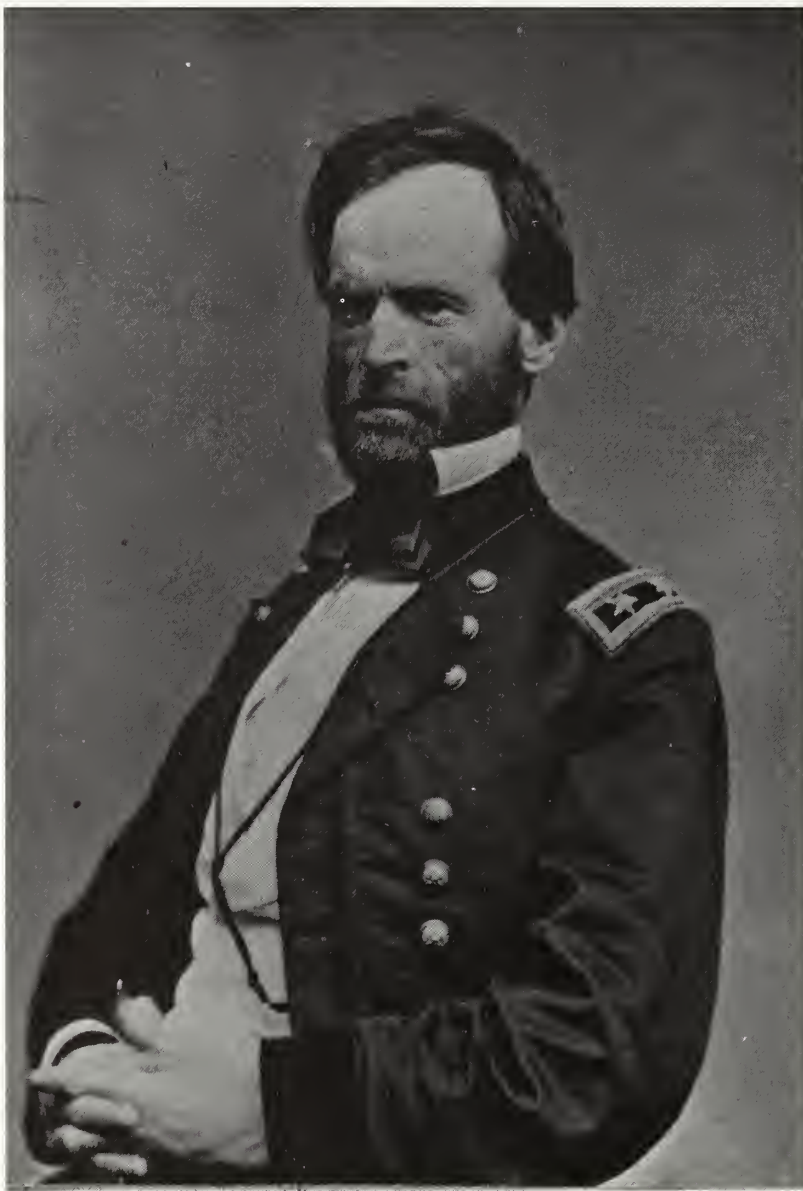
This was a man who especially valued the hard-won praise of his sometime critics. This was a man who realized the value of international opinion and who, despite his provincial background, cared for the opinions of the great world beyond the borders of the United States.

In 1864, as always, Lincoln was a man preoccupied with politics and social questions. These clippings did not contain gems of helpful political philosophy or religious musings. They show the President to have been preoccupied with what historians like James G. Randall, Reinhard Luthin, and David Donald have said he was preoccupied with, the realities of politics

and power — the strength of the Confederacy, the success of his emancipation policy, and the never-ending factional problems of Missouri politics. This was a politician's wallet, and all we can tell of his personality from the nature of the articles is that he liked humor.

It would strain these materials too much to argue with any certainty that they show us the way the President's mind was leaning near the end of his life. Still, we cannot ignore the bearing of these articles on some of the great questions of Lincolniana. When Lincoln discussed gradual emancipation with Confederate representatives at Hampton Roads in February of 1865, did he by any chance have something as leisurely as Missouri's plan in mind? When he allowed himself to think of states of quasi-freedom like apprenticeship as sequels to slavery, was he thinking of anything as restrictive as Missouri's plan of apprenticeship? Was Lincoln's conception of warfare clearly that of Sherman as described with such clarity and force in that General's orders for the march

through Georgia? Was Lincoln not fully cognizant of the extent to which the war-nurtured passions of the North would demand some psychological satisfactions from Jefferson Davis, the "Czar of Chivalry," and the rich Southerners who allegedly led the poor and industrious Southerners into a war they cared nothing about? All of the questions of Reconstruction seem to burn through these pages with an intensity and brightness that makes clear that these questions surely were the major preoccupations of the President in 1864. The atmosphere of the Hampton Roads Peace Conference and of the early period of Reconstruction with their preoccupations with sequels to slavery and the problems of dealing with the former Confederate leaders is already in these worn fragments of newspaper articles which were found in the wallet of a President released at last from turmoil and strife on April 15, 1865.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 4. General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891) forbade pillaging by his soldiers when he was in command around Memphis in 1862. His decision to march through Georgia late in 1864 in order to attack the South's only untouched base of supply, Georgia, launched him to international fame. By taking the war to the civilian economy rather than simply to the lives of soldiers, he wrenched war out of its eighteenth-century assumptions and pushed it towards the twentieth century.

Editor's Note: I wish to thank Mrs. Mary C. Lethbridge, Information Officer of the Library of Congress, for supplying us with photographs of the clippings in Lincoln's wallet.

J. Duane Squires of New London, New Hampshire, has caught two errors in *Lincoln Lore*. In Number 1664, Senator Hale was from New Hampshire not Maine. In Number 1667, Adams was a "Minister" not an "Ambassador," a title not created until 1893.

Emancipation in Missouri.

SLAVERY TO CEASE TO EXIST JULY 4, 1870.

The Missouri State Convention adjourned yesterday, after having passed the following ordinance of emancipation by a vote of fifty-one ayes against thirty-six nays:

SECTION 1. The first and second clauses of the twenty-sixth section of the 3d article of the constitution is hereby abrogated.

SEC. 2. That slavery or involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, shall cease to exist in Missouri on the 4th of July, 1870, and all slaves within the state on that day are hereby declared to be free: Provided, however, that all persons emancipated by this ordinance shall remain under the control and be subject to their late owners, or their legal representatives, as servants during the following period, to wit: Those over forty years of age, for and during their lives; those under twelve until they arrive at the age of twenty-three; and those of all other ages until the 4th of July, 1876. The persons, or their legal representatives, who, up to the moment of emancipation, were owners of slaves hereby freed, shall, during the period for which the services of such freedmen are reserved to them, have the same authority and control over the said freedmen for the purpose of receiving the possessions and services of the same that are now held by the master in respect of his slaves; provided, however, that after the said 4th of July, 1870, no person so held to service shall be sold to non-residents or removed from the state by authority of his late owner or his legal representative.

SEC. 3. All slaves hereafter brought into the state and not now belonging to citizens of the state shall thereupon be free.

SEC. 4. All slaves removed by consent of their owners to any seceded state after the passage by such state of an act or ordinance of secession, and thereafter brought into the state by their owners, shall thereupon be free.

SEC. 5. The General Assembly shall have no power to pass laws to emancipate slaves without the consent of their owners.

SEC. 6. After the passage of this ordinance no slave in this state shall be subject to state, county or municipal taxes.

Governor Gamble announced the withdrawal of his resignation. He will, therefore, continue to serve as Governor until the election of his successor on the 18th of August, 1864.

76-131
157

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PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

The large audience assembled last evening at the Academy of Music, to hear an address from Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, may be considered as fairly representing the most enlightened and intelligent population of Philadelphia. The welcome to Mr. Beecher was hearty, as it should have been. Every portion of his address was well received; but the loudest applause was given when he spoke in commendation of the course of the National Government in its prosecution of the war against the Southern rebels. An incidental allusion to General Jackson called forth some hearty plaudits. When they ceased Mr. Beecher, in his peculiar quiet way, said "Abraham Lincoln may be a great deal less testy and wilful than Andrew Jackson, but in a long race, I do not know but that he will be equal to him." The storm of applause that followed this seemed as if it never would cease. The turn given to the popular enthusiasm, by the mention of Lincoln's name alongside of Jackson's, was wholly unexpected. But the spontaneous outburst showed how strong a hold the President has upon the popular heart throughout the loyal North. As the time approaches for a new Presidential election, and people cast their eyes about for a candidate, there is no one so generally looked to as Abraham Lincoln. Other men may have the requisite talents and virtues; but none impress the people as being so well entitled to the next term of four years as the man who has so faithfully guided the republic through the terrible storms of civil war. There is a general feeling that after a term of war he is entitled to a term of peace; and that other men, military and civil, must defer their aims at least until the year 1868.

Reproduced from the collection of the Library of Congress

76-131
7/13/71

John Bright on the Presidency.

John Bright, the "British Reformer," whose efforts in behalf of the United States, in combating the English sentiment in favor of the rebels, have awakened for him love and gratitude on the part of all loyal Americans, has written a letter to Horace Greely, in which, after alluding to the great struggle for liberty, in which we are now engaged, he says :

At this moment, we turn our eyes rather to the political than to the military struggle; and there is, with us, the same difference of opinion and of sympathy, as regards your coming Presidential election, that has been manifested in connection with your contest in the field.

All those of my countrymen who have wished well to the rebellion, who have hoped for the break-up of your Union, who have preferred to see a Southern Slave Empire rather than a restored and free Republic, so far as I can observe, are now in favor of the election of Gen. McClellan. All those who have deplored the calamities which the leaders of secession have brought upon your country, who believe that Slavery weakens your power and tarnishes your good name throughout the world, and who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired and prayed for by all good men, so far as I can judge, are heartily longing for the re-election of Mr. Lincoln. Every friend of your Union, probably, in Europe, every speaker and writer who has sought to do justice to your cause since the war began, is now hoping, with an intense anxiety, that Mr. Lincoln may be placed at the head of your Executive for another term.

It is not because they believe Mr. Lincoln to be wiser or better than all other men on your continent, but they think they have observed in his career a grand simplicity of purpose, and a patriotism which knows no change and which does not falter. To some of his countrymen there may appear to have been errors in his course. It would be strange indeed if, in the midst of difficulties so stupendous and so unexpected, any administration or any ruler should wholly avoid mistakes. To us, looking on from this distance, and unmoved by the passions from which many of your people can hardly be expected to be free—regarding his Presidential path with the calm judgment which belongs rather to history than to the present time, as our outside position enables us, in some degree, to regard it—we see in it an honest endeavor faithfully to do the work of his great office, and, in the doing of it, a brightness of personal honor on which no adversary has yet been able to fix a stain.

I believe that the effect of Mr. Lincoln's re-election in England, and in Europe, and indeed throughout the world, will be this: It will convince all men that the integrity of your great country will be preserved, and it will show that Republican institutions, *with an instructed and patriotic people*, can bear a nation safely and steadily through the most desperate perils.

76-131

RPT

Reproduced from the collections of the Library of Congress

A Conscript's Epistle to Jeff. Davis.

The following quaint epistle has been furnished for publication by a member of the Mounted Rifles, who picked it up in a deserted rebel camp on the Chowan river, about thirty miles from Winton, while out on a scouting expedition last spring.

The letter was addressed in this wise:

Read, if you want to, you thieving scalp hunter, whoever you are, and forward, post paid, to the lord high chancellor of the devil's exchequer (!) on earth.

JEFF. DAVIS, Richmond, Va.
HEADQUARTERS "SCALP HUNTERS," }
CAMP CHOWAN, N. C., Jan. 11. }

Excellency Davis:

With feelings of undeveloped pleasure that an affectionate conscript intrusts this sheet of confiscated paper to the tender mercies of a Confederate States mail carrier, addressed, as it shall be, to yourself, O Jeff., Red Jacket of the Gulf, and Chief of the Six Nations—more or less. He writes on the stump of a shivered monarch of the forest, with the "pine trees wailing round him," and "Endymion's planet rising on the air." To you, O Czár of all Chivalry and Khan of Cotton Tartary, he appeals for the privilege of seeking, on his own hook, a land less free—a home among the hyenas of the North. Will you not halt your "brave columns," and stay your gorgeous career for a thin space!—and while an admiring world takes a brief gaze at your glorious and God-forsaken cause, pen for the happy conscript a furlough without end? Do so, and mail it, if you please, and mail it to that city the windy, waudering, Wigfall didn't winter in, called for short Philadelphia.

The Etesian winds sweeping down the defiles of the Old Dominion, and over the swamps of Suffolk, come moaning through the pines of the old State, laden with the music, and sigh themselves away into sweet sounds of silence to the far-off South. Your happy conscript would go to the far-away North whence the wind comes, and leave you to reap the whirlwind, with no one but your father, the Devil, to rake and bind after you. And he's going.

It is with intense and multifariously proud satisfaction that he gazes for the last time upon our holy flag, that symbol and sign of an adored trinity—cotton, niggers and chivalry. He still sees it in the little camp on the Chowan, tied to the peak of its palmetto pole, and floating out over our boundless Confederacy, the revived relic of ages gone, banner of our king of few days and full of trouble. And that pole in its tapering uprightness testifying some of the grandest beauties of our nationality; its peak pointing hopefully toward the tropical stars, and its biggest end—run into the ground. Relic and pole, good bye. 'Tis best the conscript goes; his claim to chivalry he ~~has~~ ^{made} before him. Behind he leaves the legitimate chivalry of this unbounded nation centered in the illegitimate son of a Kentucky horse-thief.

But a few more words, illustrious President, and he is done—done gone.

Elevated by their sufferings and snuffages to the highest office in the gift of a great and exceeding free people, you have held your position without a change of base, or purpose of any sort, through weary months of war, and want, and woe; and though every conscript would unite with the thousands of loyal and true men in the South in a grand old grief at your downfall, so too will they shuk under the calamity of an exquisite joy when you shall have reached that eminent meridian whence all progress is perpendicular.

And now, bastard President of a political abortion, farewell.

"Scalp hunters," relic, pole, and chivalrous confederates in crime, good-bye. Except it be in the army of the Union, you will not again see the conscript.

NORM. HARKNOLD,
of Ashe county, N. C.

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The Disaffection Among the Southern Soldiers.

The Toledo (Ohio) Blade publishes, from the original copy now in possession of its editors, the following letter, which was picked up in the streets of Brandon, Mississippi, by Captain Dinnis, of the 62d Ohio Regiment. The Blade says that it is written in unusually fair penmanship, and is evidently the production of an intelligent man who is in a position to speak correctly of that whereof he writes. It confirms other reports which we have recently had from the South of the demoralization and despondency of many of its soldiers:

BRANDON, July 16, 1863.

I wrote to you very hurriedly yesterday, and this morning learn that Gen. Johnston has ordered this army to be marched across to Enterprise, one hundred miles further. It will take a week longer. No provision has been made along the route, and the men are already much dissatisfied with the vacillating policy and hollow promises by which they have been duped so long.

Of the thirty thousand paroled at Vicksburg, only one-half are now together, and ere we reach Enterprise this number will be reduced to five thousand—they of the Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee troops, who also will leave with or without furloughs so soon as they learn the alternative of going into camp of parole. The army of the Mississippi is completely lost.

Meantime, Gen. Johnston holds Jackson—we hear the guns constantly. The enemy are making gradual approaches, and after a week longer will have that place. With it falls Mobile. This entire section is fleeing eastward. Georgia will have a population of five millions to feed this year. Ruin, utter and entire ruin, has swept over this State. The negro emancipation policy, at which we so long hooted, is the most potent lever of our overthrow. It steals upon us unawares, and ere we can do anything the plantations are deserted, families without servants, camps without necessary attendants, women and children in want and misery. In short, the disadvantages to us now arising from the negroes are ten-fold greater than have been all the advantages derived from earlier in the war.

It is useless to discuss the errors of the past—possibly there have been none that could have been avoided—certainly we are a defeated and a ruined people, shorn of our strength, powerless for a successful solution of the problem undertaken; or, rather ours was erroneous. The solution has been shown us by a more favored people.

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SHERMAN'S ORDERS FOR HIS MARCH.

SPECIAL FIELD ORDER—NO. 120.

HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY DIVISION OF THE }
MISSISSIPPI, IN THE FIELD, }
KINGSTON, Ga., Nov. 9, 1864.

I. For the purpose of military operations this army is divided into two wings, viz., the right wing, Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard commanding, the 15th and 17th corps; the left wing, Maj. Gen. H. W. Slocum commanding, the 14th and 20th corps.

II. The habitual order of march will be, whenever practicable, by four roads, as nearly parallel as possible, and converging at points hereafter to be indicated in orders. The cavalry, Brig. Gen. Kilpatrick commanding, will receive special orders from the Commander-in-Chief.

III. There will be no general trains of supplies, but each corps will have its ammunition and provision train, distributed habitually as follows: Behind each regiment should follow one wagon and one ambulance; behind each brigade should follow a due proportion of ammunition wagons, provision wagons and ambulances. In case of danger, each army corps should change this order of march by having his advance and rear brigade unencumbered by wheels. The separate columns will start habitually at seven a. m., and make about fifteen miles per day, unless otherwise fixed in orders.

IV. The army will forage liberally on the country during the march. To this end, each brigade commander will organize a good and sufficient foraging party, under the command of one or more discreet officers, who will gather near the route traveled corn or forage of any kind, meat of any kind, vegetables, corn meal, or whatever is needed by the command; aiming at all times to keep in the wagon trains at least ten days provisions for the command and three days forage. Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants or commit any trespass; during the halt or a camp they may be permitted to gather turnips, potatoes and other vegetables, and drive in stock in front of their camps. To regular foraging parties must be entrusted the gathering of provisions and forage at any distance from the road traveled.

V. To army corps commanders is entrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton gins, &c., and for them this general principle is laid down: In districts and neighborhoods where the army is unmolested, no destruction of such property should be permitted; but should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army corps commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of such hostility.

VI. As for horses, mules, wagons, &c., belonging to the inhabitants, the cavalry and artillery may appropriate freely and without limit; discriminating, however, between the rich, who are usually hostile, and the poor or industrious, usually neutral or friendly. Foraging parties may also take mules or horses to replace the jaded animals of their trains, or to serve as pack mules for the regiments or brigades. In all foraging, of whatever kind, the parties engaged will refrain from abusive or threatening language, and may when the officer in command thinks proper, give written certificates of the facts, but no receipts; and they will endeavor to leave with each family a reasonable portion for their maintenance.

VII. Negroes who are able-bodied and can be of service to the several columns, may be taken along; but each army commander will bear in mind that the question of supplies is a very important one, and that his first duty is to see to those who bear arms.

VIII. The organization at once of a good pioneer battalion for each corps, composed, if possible, of negroes, should be attended to. This battalion should follow the advance guard, should repair roads and double them if possible, so that the columns will not be delayed after reaching bad places. Also, army commanders should study the habit of giving the artillery and wagons the road, and marching their troops on one side; and also instruct their troops to assist wagons at steep hills or bad crossings of streams.

IX. Capt. O. M. Poe, Chief Engineer, will assign to each wing of the army a pontoon train, fully equipped and organized, and the commanders thereof will see to its being properly protected at all times.

By order of Maj. Gen. W. T. SHERMAN.
L. M. DAYTON, Aid de Camp.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI.

We confess our inability to perceive in the message of the Governor of Missouri, the portions of which document that are of general interest we printed yesterday, any trace of that copperheadism or disloyalty so freely charged upon him by the radicals. He congratulates the State upon its pacification, upon the fact that there is no military organization within its borders hostile to the Government of the United States; and declares that: "*our chief duty is to support the Government with all our energies in its endeavors to suppress the rebellion in other States.*" That we understand to be loyal. It meets the case exactly. If there is any copperhead about it, we can't see it. The Ordinance of Emancipation Governor GAMBLE accepts "as a measure that will, in a brief period, *accomplish the great object to be attained in making Missouri a FREE STATE.*" He believes it will go quietly into operation "and the State be relieved of all the evils of slavery." That don't seem to us to be a disloyal opinion. The Governor is also disposed to encourage the emigration of free laborers from Europe, and recommends a special appropriation to promote that object. If Governor GAMBLE were a Kentuckian we should think him a very sound Union man. We do not know but he would be charged with being an "Abolitionist." Slavery is dead in Missouri. That vast State, the geographical center of the Republic, may henceforth be set down as a free State. But the radicals are not satisfied with the death of slavery. Like the boy who pounded the dead snake, they want to "make it *deader.*" And we have no objections to any blows inflicted upon the institution. But because the President did not yield to demands of the radicals that seemed intolerant and obtrusive, he is charged by hundreds of furious journalists with deserting "the cause of freedom." The charge is unfounded and absurd. Doubtless he would rejoice as heartily as any radical, at the speedy abolition of slavery in Missouri, but he is not disposed to encourage excesses that might damage the good cause itself.

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Change At Brooks Brothers? It's Unlikely (Heading)

NEW YORK (AP) - Brooks Brothers, that cradle-to-grave outfitter of preppy America, is being buttoned-down about any change its new owner will bring to the nation's oldest clothing company.

The directors of Garfinckel, Brooks Brothers, Miller & Rhoads Inc. announced plans last week to accept a \$53 per share offer by Allied Stores, Inc. Brooks Brothers' Golden Fleece insignia is part of the deal.

But at the Madison Avenue emporium and Brooks Brothers' executive suite--both, as always, teeming with three-piece pinstripe suits, button-down shirts and striped ties--the change in ownership produced few ripples and little comment.

"I can't say anything about that," said Robert Dawson, vice president of sales promotion (dressed, of course, in a white button-down shirt, etc.)

Change at Brooks Brothers, you see, is as unfamiliar as blue jeans. Brooks Brothers proffers neither.

For 163 years, Brooks Brothers has eschewed "fashion," Dawson said. Vogue magazine once put it another way: "Setting trends by ignoring them". And Dawson puts it this way: "The great strength of Brooks Brothers has been its relative unchangeability."

In fashion, bright colors and patterns come and go. So do suit lapels that threaten to touch the shoulder and ties that shrink to strings. At Brooks Brothers, such change for change's sake doesn't get through the front door, past the striped ties, green and yellow sweaters and narrow lapels that could have

been there last year--and the last 50 years.

Brooks Brothers likes things the way they were, are now and will forever continue to be--classic.

Salesman Joseph Mancini, whose customers over the past 55 years have included Clark Gable and Jimmy Stewart (who wears a 38 extra long), isn't worried.

"Brooks Brothers change? Nah. If it does change, they (Allied) are going to lose out," said Mancini, a white-haired 69-year-old (dressed in a paisley bow tie, three-button pin-striped suit and, of course a button-down white shirt).

To Brooks Brothers believers, Brooks Brothers is a religion. And to the company's publicity department, it's a two-page listing of tid-bits including:

- Abe Lincoln was wearing a Brooks Brothers natural-shoulder frock coat when he was assassinated.

- Author John O'Hara always dressed heroes at Brooks Brothers; the bad guys buried under padded shoulders and flared lapels.

- Shoppers have included Fred Astaire, Andy Warhol.

A young boy's introduction to the Brooks Brothers label often is a family rite.

On Park Avenue one day, a reporter overheard a white-haired well dressed man talk proudly about his first grandson.

"Can't wait to get him into Brooks Brothers" he said.

"Why haven't you?" a friend asked.

"I will, I will," he responded, "just as soon as he stops wetting his pants."

C.C. M. NEELY

The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets, And What They Suggest About Him

By Nardi Reeder Campion

HANOVER, N.H. — Abraham Lincoln's memory is a memory Americans want to keep green.

On April 14, 121 years ago, Mr. Lincoln donned his frock coat, silk hat and leather boots to take Mary Todd to the theater. He had no enthusiasm for "Our American Cousin," the silly comedy they were to see at Ford's Theater. Exhausted from a bloody war and a soul-searing election, he preferred to stay home.

But his presence had been advertised and he hated to disappoint anyone. So he and Mrs. Lincoln left the White House — their home for four years and 41 days — and rode across town in a closed carriage, arriving after the play had begun. As they entered the box, the band struck up "Hail to the Chief." He was 56, she 46; they had been married 23 years.

During the third act, John Wilkes Booth crept into the box and fired his small derringer at the back of the President's head. Six soldiers carried the unconscious President through the crowd across 10th Street to a house where a man with a lighted candle stood beckoning. Gently they placed the long, painfully thin body diagonally — because of his six feet, four inches — on a cornhusk mattress in a boarder's room.

Five doctors worked over him, but everyone knew it was hopeless. His



ably wearing: a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses mended with string, a pyramid-shaped quartz watch fob that would have hung from the gold chain across his vest, and one dark blue enamel cufflink marked with a gold "L."

The wallet is a small accordion of supple brown leather lined with purple silk. It has one compartment for notes with a thin pencil inserted in it, and another labeled "Railroad Tickets." It also contained a Confederate \$5 bill and eight newspaper clippings.

Poring over the small relics, one wonders if Mr. Lincoln could actually see out of those minute eyeglasses. Did he ever use that wide linen handkerchief? Did he, like Mark Twain, think the beginning of wisdom is when you start to carry a pocket-knife? What did those clippings mean to him? Why was the defender of the Union carrying Confederate money?

The last may be the easiest to answer. President Lincoln had just returned from two weeks in war-torn Richmond — he was there April 9 when Lee surrendered — and historians surmise that he kept the bill with Jefferson Davis's picture on it as a memento of the war.

The clippings, one supposes, he valued for a reason most of us can understand — positive reinforcement. All of them lauded Lincoln. Here was a man who withstood brutal verbal abuse without flinching, but when he found an article that praised him, he

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They were removed after his death

head, oozing blood behind the left ear, lay still. Watching his "carved-ploughed" face, his son Robert wept quietly. His wife Mary went to pieces. Two of their four sons, Edward and Will, had died — and now this. "Bring Tad — he will speak to Tad — he loves him so." But he never spoke again. At 7:22 the next morning he died.

In the confusion that followed, someone emptied the contents of the President's pockets into a box. Years later, Robert Todd Lincoln passed the box on to his daughter, Mary Lincoln Isham, and in 1937 Mrs. Isham included it with Lincoln memorabilia she presented to the Library of Congress. When Daniel J. Boorstin became the Librarian of Congress in 1976, he discovered the box, labeled "Do Not Open," locked in a vault. While his wife and staff watched, he unrolled the string and brown paper. The bits are now in a glass case on the balcony of the Great Hall of the Library of Congress. Dr. Boorstin has said he hopes the homely items from Lincoln's pockets will humanize a great man who has been "mythologically engulfed."

And in a way they do.

The morning he died, Lincoln had in his pocket a pair of spectacles folded into a silver case, an oversized Irish linen handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" worked in red cross stitch; a curved ivory pocketknife trimmed in silver; a velvet eyeglass cleaner about the size of a quarter; and a wallet. Three other items, he was prob-



ably wearing: a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses mended with string, a pyramid-shaped quartz watch fob that would have hung from the gold chain across his vest, and one dark blue enamel cufflink marked with a gold "L."

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They evoke a sad, thoughtful, vulnerable man

kept it. Even to a casual reader these eight articles are heart-warming.

One clipping reports a speech that the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher made at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. "Abraham Lincoln may be a great deal less testy and wilful than Andrew Jackson, but in a long race, I do not know but that he will be equal to him." The article then added: "The storm of applause that followed this seemed as if it never would cease. The turn given to the popular enthusiasm by the mention of Lincoln's name alone side of Jackson's, was wholly unexpected. But the spontaneous outburst showed how strong a feeling the President has upon the popular heart throughout the loyal North."

Another, written by the English reformer John Bright to the American publisher Horace Greeley, presents a personal estimate of our 16th President: "All those who believe that Slavery weakens [America's] power and tarnishes your good name throughout the world, and who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired . . . are heartily longing for the re-election of Mr. Lincoln . . . they think they have observed in his career a grand simplicity of purpose and a patriotism which knows no change and does not falter."

The contents of Lincoln's pockets have an immediacy that transcends time. They invoke a sad, thoughtful, and even vulnerable man. And they conjure up Good Friday, 1865, when he died.

Nardi Reeder Campion is a writer who has had a lifelong interest in Abraham Lincoln.

APRIL 29, 1986

Humble legacy

Treasures
in Lincoln's
pocket don't
fit the man
of myth

By Nardi Reeder Campion

Abraham Lincoln's memory is a memory Americans want to keep green.

On April 14, some 123 years ago, Lincoln donned his frock coat, silk hat and leather boots to take his wife, Mary Todd, to the theater. He had no enthusiasm for "Our American Cousin," the silly comedy they were to see at Ford's Theater. Exhausted from a bloody war and a soul-searching election, he preferred to stay home.

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Detail from a period print of the scene at Lincoln's deathbed.

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See Lincoln, pg. 5

Lincoln

Continued from page 1

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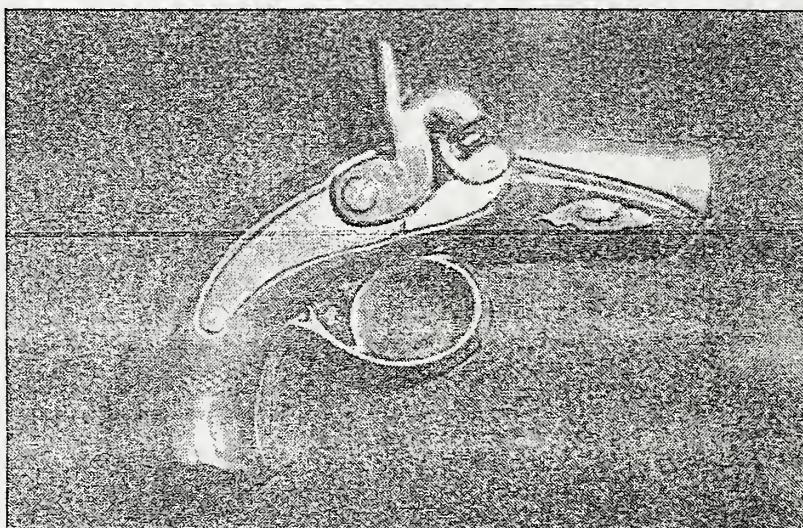
The contents of Lincoln's pockets when he died: an immediacy that transcends time.

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A replica of the gun that John Wilkes booth used to kill Lincoln, a .41 Deringer pistol.

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The contents of Lincoln's

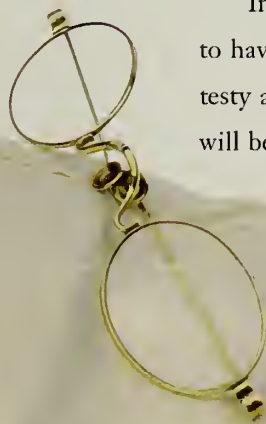
pockets have an immediacy that transcends time. They invoke a sad, thoughtful and even vulnerable man. And they conjure up Good Friday, 1865, when he died.

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Sanctified *by* Blood

The contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night he was assassinated show how ordinary objects can be transformed into national relics

Among the president's possessions on the night he died: a shirt button, spectacles, a handkerchief and a watch fob



A. Lincoln



By THOMAS MALLON

IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 1864, ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS IN THE MOOD TO SAVOR ANY available approbation. He was worried, even expecting, that George B. McClellan, the general he had once mocked for having a case of the "slows," would be elected to succeed him as president of the United States. Just as 100 years later Lyndon Johnson would scan a chattering triptych of television screens in search of good news from the networks, Lincoln must have spent some of the election season poring over newspapers, scissors in hand, looking for whatever comfort he could clip. Two cuttings that he made—or perhaps, knowing they would be favorably received, his secretaries John Hay and John Nicolay handed to him—conveyed support from unlikely quarters.

In Philadelphia, McClellan's hometown, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was reported to have told an audience at the Academy of Music that Lincoln might "be a great deal less testy and wilful than Andrew Jackson, but in a long race, I do not know but that [Lincoln] will be equal to him." The newspaper went on to note how the "storm of applause that followed this seemed as if it would never cease. The turn given to the

popular enthusiasm, by the mention of Lincoln's name alongside of Jackson's, was wholly unexpected." England, whose early sympathy for the Confederacy was vexing, had often sent bad news; but a second clipping reported that in a letter to Horace Greeley, the British reformer John Bright, who had tried to undo both the corn laws and capital punishment, declared every European "friend of your Union" likely to back Lincoln over his Democratic opponent. The clippings went into a billfold lined with purple silk and divided into compartments for NOTES, U.S. CURRENCY and R.R. TICKETS. There they stayed for the remaining months of the president's life—through Sherman's



scourging of Georgia; Lincoln's victory at the polls and conciliatory second inaugural; Lee's surrender at Appomattox; and, on Tuesday, April 4, 1865, Lincoln's own visit to the captured capital of Richmond, where he added a small trophy to the billfold: a \$5 Confederate bank note bearing the portrait of Jefferson Davis.

As Lincoln rode to the theater on the evening of Good Friday, 1865, the billfold rested inside his frock coat with a half-dozen other items, each as compact as the president was rangy. There was a folded linen handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" embroidered in small red letters, and a curved pocketknife he probably used to repair one of the sets of spectacles he also carried that night—a small gold pair from the aptly named Franklin & Co. firm of Washington opticians. The spectacles' left wire arm had been fixed with string, the way an unfussy person might today apply a Band-Aid. A different pair of lenses folded up at the nose bridge. A thin pencil; some chamois pads with which to clean the eyeglasses; and a substantial watch fob—a pyramid of quartz in a little gold cage, unattached to any timepiece, as if to signify that Lincoln's time was at an end—formed the rest of his pockets' inventory. The frock coat in which the objects rode was protected by a heavy overcoat, a gift from Brooks Brothers for the second inaugural, its silk lining marked by a quilted federal eagle and the inscription "One Country One Destiny."

While the president watched Laura Keane and Harry Hawk grind through Tom Taylor's threadbare comedy *Our American Cousin* (it is doubtful that Lincoln, being farsighted, required either pair of glasses to see the actors), the contents of his pockets, commonplace and useful things (except for the clippings, the pretty watch fob and whimsical bank note), sat there with him, ready to mutate from paraphernalia into relics.

By 10:15 p.m. there was nothing that could stop John Wilkes Booth. The bodyguard at the door of the box had left his post. The assassin, fortified with a gulp of whiskey from Taltavul's tavern downstairs, had only to wait for the funniest line in Act 3, Scene 2 ("you sockdologizing old man-trap"), the one that would bring on a laugh big enough to drown out the report of his derringer. No appeal to his reason or mercy could any longer be made. And yet, there in the dark, Lincoln had one on his person. Inside the billfold, and generally ignored by historians in their amusement over Lincoln's collection of good press, were a few other newspaper clippings. These additional cuttings spoke to the conversion process; they appealed to rationality and what Lincoln himself had, before the war began, called "the better angels of our nature." One of them, printed in the Toledo *Blade*, was a letter written by a Confederate soldier on July 16, 1863, and found in the streets of Brandon, Mississippi, by a captain of the 62nd Ohio Regiment: "It is useless to discuss the errors of the past," wrote the discouraged Southerner; "possibly there have been none that could have been avoided—certainly we are a defeated and a ruined people, shorn of our strength, powerless for a successful solution...."

"Useless": the last word Booth himself would speak, 12 days later, as he lay dying on the porch of Richard Garrett's farmhouse, regarding his own hands. By then he was aware of the futility of the bullet they had fired into Lincoln's brain, and of the great wound his dagger had put into the president's theater guest, Maj. Henry Rathbone, who with his fiancée,



Clara Harris, the daughter of a New York senator, had been invited at the last minute to replace General and Mrs. Grant. After Booth severed one of Rathbone's arteries, the major "bled so profusely as to make him very weak," Clara Harris wrote in a letter 11 days later. "My whole clothing, as I sat in the box was saturated literally with blood, & my hands & face—You may imagine what a scene." Like the objects Lincoln carried, Rathbone and Harris arrived at the theater with nothing much for history to remark upon. But as they crossed 10th Street to the home of the tailor William Petersen, where throughout the night Lincoln's possessions must have hung from a hook in the back bedroom while doctors attempted to save him, the young couple, drenched with Rathbone's blood, were themselves turning into relics, left not so much with a future as a terrible postscript they were doomed to write together.

IT WAS PROBABLY ROBERT TODD LINCOLN, THE president's grown son, who took possession of his father's effects, carrying them away from either the Petersen house or the subsequent autopsy at the White House. For more than 70 years they remained in the Lincoln family, until in 1937 Robert's daughter, Mary Lincoln Isham, donated them to the Library of Congress. For nearly four decades after that, the objects rested in the Librarian's safe, unseen by the American people as we fought a world war, ventured into space and observed the hundredth anniversary of each Civil War milestone from Fort Sumter to Ford's Theatre. Finally, during the American bicentennial, Daniel J. Boorstin, the historian then heading the Library, arranged for the items to be put on exhibition in the institution's Great Hall. For the past several years, no longer on display, they have been kept in a cunningly constructed box of beige linen and brown leather. The newspaper clippings are under Mylar in a drawer beneath the box's main display surface, whose sculpted indentations provide a snug holder for each item—including, now, a monogrammed button thought to have come off the president's shirt while doctors removed his garments in search of additional wounds. The smaller box in which the items rested from 1937 to 1976, as well as its silver skeleton key, now sits inside the larger, more recent construction. Another compartment holds a pair of thin white gloves, reminiscent of the ones Lincoln wore to Ford's, for use by any curator who must handle the objects.

Lincoln's possessions must have hung from a hook in the back bedroom while doctors tried to save him



*At left, the Confederate bill, the chamois pads for cleaning his
glasses, and the ivory-handled pocketknife*

Displaying them was probably considered unseemly in the late 1930s, speculates James Gilreath, curator of Americana in the Library's Rare Book Division. They were still too close to the living person, having come, after all, not from some distant relative but a grandchild. Today, as the bicentennial of Lincoln's own birth begins to approach, a viewer of the box's contents finds nothing grotesque in the sight, but he does feel an aversion, beyond curatorial rules, to touching the objects. These bits of glass and string and paper are no longer things in themselves.

By saturation or mere proximity, blood is what sanctifies a relic. It is the sulfuric elixir that transmutes what alchemists would call the *prima materia* of the linen handkerchief or the worthless bank note. Blood was the war's literal medium and its rhetorical element—throughout its battles, at its conclusion and for long decades after. The vintage trampled out by the Lord in Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was the bloody wine press of Isaiah 63:3: "For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." The country itself, not just its individual sons, had nearly bled to death by 1865. It was the *nation's* wounds that Lincoln spoke of binding up at his second inaugural, only six weeks before the assassination. And it was the "bloody shirt" that Republican politicians would wave for another generation, anytime they wanted to remind voters of the South's antebellum Democratic traditions.

In his *Political Dictionary*, William Safire traces the term to James Baird Weaver, an abolitionist fond of telling "how in the 1850s he acquired the stained and shredded linen of a preacher who had been flogged for inflaming slaves. I waved it before the crowds," said Weaver, "and bellowed: 'under this bloody shirt we propose to march to victory.'" Putting the ritual in its long historical context, Safire reminds us that Mark Antony waved Caesar's saturated mantle before a susceptible crowd, and that Abraham Lincoln himself, while serving the prosecution at a murder trial in Illinois, displayed the victim's stained clothing and said: "It is better to wave the bloody shirt than to waive justice."

The blood that drenched the box at Ford's and the gutter of 10th Street belonged entirely to Henry Rathbone, who almost died as Mrs. Lincoln hung on his shredded arm, screaming, while the presidential party made its way through a gathering mob and into the Petersen house. Lincoln, despite his wife's cries ("Oh, my husband's blood! My dear husband's

blood!"), had barely bled at all. It was the suffusion of his wound that frustrated the doctors; they kept breaking up the clot to prevent pressure in his skull from building up to a fatal level. The temporary success of their efforts could be seen only on the pillows in the back bedroom, where the president rested until his death at 7:22 a.m. on April 15. Incredibly, the bloody pillow he died on remained on display in the house (now a federal museum) until March 1994, sustaining damage from the sun, until the building's curator, S. Marshal Kesler, sent it away for conservation work. While only prudent, indeed overdue, her action was not universally popular, and the pillow remains the first item that many visitors to the house ask to see.

Jacqueline Kennedy, a woman with a literary appreciation of ritual, displayed her understanding of blood's mystic and inflammatory powers when, on the afternoon of November 22, 1963, she refused to change out of her stained clothing. "Let them see what they've done," she is reported to have said aboard Air Force One as John F. Kennedy's body was returned from Dallas to Washington. It was this implacable gesture, as much as the killing itself, that turned the bouquet of red roses she had been presented with at Love Field into a terrible foreshadowing object.

Nellie Connally rejected any such attempt to conjure with the gunfire that her husband, John, had, after all, survived. She expressed surprise at the Warren Commission's apparent indifference to the ballistics potential of the shirt the Texas governor had been wearing: "I had the clothes, but nobody seemed interested. After about seven weeks I took John's shirt ... it was all smeared with his flesh and blood, and dipped it in cold water several times to try and preserve it. Someone finally came to pick up his clothes. I think the Commission said his shirt was useless as evidence because it had been 'laundered.' But I never laundered it, I just soaked it in cold water." The Warren Commission did photograph the shirt, and during his testimony Governor Connally informed its members that he had given it to the state archives of Texas. (The question that elicited this fact was curiously animistic: "What is the permanent home of these clothes at the present time when they are not on Commission business?")

The Lincoln relics had to survive the chaos and violence that created them. The watch fob, now lying peacefully in its customized compartment, looks inevitable and significant, but on the night of the president's killing it would have been just one more nuisance to be frantically stripped away. In 1964, Diana Hamilton Bowron, a young English nurse who had been on duty at Parkland Hospital as Kennedy was brought in, testified to the Warren Commission's Arlen Specter: "When we were doing a cutdown on the President's left arm, his gold watch was in the way and they broke it—you know, undid it and it was slipping down and I just dropped it off of his hand and put it in my pocket and forgot completely about it until his body was being taken out of the emergency room and then I realized, and ran out to give it to one of the Secret Service men or anybody I could find." At that moment, it was a piece of property that regulations required returning; 30 years later it would probably seem stately with meaning, symbolic in the manner of Lincoln's untethered watch fob.

In the jacket he wore over a white shirt with gray stripes (ordered from Cardin's after he'd admired the style on French ambassador Hervé Alphand), President Kennedy was carrying

* In the papers at the time she was reported to have said, "I want them to see what they have done to my husband."

a card that had been handed to him at breakfast that morning by Msgr. Vincent Wolf: "We, the school children, the nuns and priests of Holy Family Church in Fort Worth are happy to offer one thousand Masses for the spiritual and temporal welfare of you and your family, and to show our love and devotion to the President of the United States of America...."

The Mass card, as familiar to Catholics as a rosary or building-fund envelope, was translated by blood into something fateful, cruel in its failure to protect the president's "temporal welfare," which was now, like the thousand days of his administration, one for each of those Masses, at an end. Considering it today, one thinks it should somehow have worked the same miracle performed by the eyeglass case resting in the breast pocket of Theodore Roosevelt on October 14, 1912. That object, along with the folded text of a Bull Moose campaign speech, slowed a bullet fired at the ex-president, saving his life and earning its own magical latter-day presence in Roosevelt's boyhood home, now a museum, on Manhattan's East 20th Street. The thing has a peculiar power, as if the case carried not mere spectacles but second sight, just as Lincoln's four lenses, all of them ready but not in use, make one think of the eyes he would have required in the back of his head to detect Booth's entrance into the box.

THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF RELIGIOUS relics depends on a willingness to believe in them. In the early Middle Ages, according to historian Patrick J. Geary, the bones of saints provided "the only recourse against the myriad ills, physical, material, and psychic, of a population defenseless before an incomprehensible and terrifying universe." As Geary demonstrates in his book *Furta Sacra*, the monasteries holding the relics counted on them for protection against the same predatory nobles who needed the relics' help against their own foes: "The regional councils at which nobles swore to limit the extension and duration of their violence were usually convened around a particular saint, and it was before the saint that the oath to preserve the peace was extracted."

Our own material world may be more orderly than the ninth century's, but the universe remains "incomprehensible and terrifying." Modern historical relics—the accouterments of secular figures instead of the body parts of saints—may not be brandished so desperately, but we maintain them as carefully as the Library does Lincoln's possessions because they provide the only human bulwark against time: continuity. They are proof of connection, signs not only of fealty but, more important, of provenance and legitimacy. During the past year and a half, the White House was damaged by an airplane and automatic-weapon fire. In neither instance was President Clinton endangered, but the incidents appalled people as attacks on the mansion itself, a functioning relic, and all it represents. The plane, for instance, sliced through a magnolia tree planted by Andrew Jackson, a living object seen by 35 subsequent pairs of presidential eyes.

The historical relics we prize may run more to items of clothing than corporeal remains, but we have not evolved entirely beyond a wish to traffic in flesh and bone. Recent years have seen a rash of requests for the exhumation of historical figures. Zachary Taylor's skeleton was dug up in 1991 by a group

For decades after the assassination, Lincoln's body excited competition among various locales wanting to entomb it



At right, the second pair of glasses and their leather case, the silk-lined billfold and a pencil Lincoln kept inside it

who theorized that he had been the victim of arsenic poisoning and not, as history has always had it, too much ice milk and cherries (or cucumbers) consumed on the Fourth of July. (No arsenic traces were found, and the American public remains free to honor the memory of Taylor's vice president and successor, Millard Fillmore, who had been mentioned as a possible conspirator.) That same year, the corpse of Huey Long's assassin, a doctor shot by Long's bodyguards immediately after he shot the Kingfish, was exhumed in an effort to show that Dr. Weiss could not have performed the deed after all. Most recently, requests have been made to bring up the bodies of John Connally (to retrieve significant bullet particles) and John Wilkes Booth—or whoever was put in his grave after Lincoln's assassin supposedly escaped to the American West.

All these requests—the one for Booth was rejected last May—have been made in the name of forensic science, but there is also something grimly ritualistic (perhaps a hope for dark empowerment) in these pleadings to touch the famous dead. For more than three decades after the assassination, Lincoln's body exercised enough of a hold on the national imagination to excite competition among various locales wanting to entomb it more grandly than it had been at Springfield's Oak Ridge Cemetery. In 1876, some counterfeiter, hoping to ransom their ringleader from Joliet State Prison and realize another \$200,000 for themselves, broke into the crypt and nearly made off with the body. Before the remains were permanently buried under several feet of cement in 1901, a plumber, according to Philip B. Kunhardt et al., the authors of *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography*, "cut a little window in the lead of the coffin just over Lincoln's face. A pungent odor arose. There was the face, still white from the chalk applied by the undertaker on the funeral trip west back in 1865.... Seventeen honored Springfield citizens were asked to peer inside the coffin on this final day, and as each one confirmed the identity of the coffin's occupant, their thoughts could not have been far different from those of the young doctor Edward Curtis, who had held Lincoln's brain in his hand [during the autopsy] thirty-six years before: 'As I looked, I felt more profoundly impressed than ever with the mystery of that unknown something which may be named "vital spark."'"

To possess Lincoln's corpse would be to own something quasi-holy. The conjunction of the political and sacred has persisted into modern times, most spectacularly in the corpse



of Eva Peron, the embalming of which took six months. The body was later stolen, hidden, buried in Italy, returned to Peron in Spain and then brought back from exile, to Argentina, with him. In Buenos Aires's Recoleta cemetery it remains an instrument of wishes. "The sarcophagus cannot be seen," wrote V.S. Naipaul in the 1970s, "but it is known to be there. On the morning I went, white lilies were tied with a white scarf to the black rails, and there was a single faded red rose..." Depending on a country's history, a political corpse is the crime scene, or the better days to which posterity feels compelled to return.

In modern secular democracies, the relics of history may possess, for many citizens, more potency than religious ones. After viewing the Lincoln relics exhibit at the time of the American bicentennial, Stanley Kunitz opened his poem on the subject with a memory of how, during an Italian visit, the effects of real saints had left his imagination cold, whereas Lincoln's button and watch fob now seemed "miraculous."

Here is the American Christ, fit for veneration by even nonbelievers. The centurion at this crucifixion, Major Rathbone, produced three children, the eldest of whom was keenly aware of his ineffable inheritance. Born in 1870 on Lincoln's own birthday, February 12, Henry Riggs Rathbone made Illinois his adopted state and, in 1922, got himself elected its at-large Republican congressman. A well-known lecturer on the 16th president, he pressed his connection to the box at Ford's, sponsoring the bill through which the United States acquired a major collection of Lincoln relics in 1926, and rising on the floor of the House to deliver remarks on the 115th anniversary of Lincoln's birth: "As you doubtless know, my parents were the young engaged couple, Major Rathbone and Miss Harris, the daughter of United States Senator Ira Harris, of New York, who drove that fateful night of April 14, 1865, with President and Mrs. Lincoln in the carriage to Ford's Theatre and sat with him in the box, when the bullet of the assassin cut short the life of the President. I am able to say with the utmost assurance of truth and judging from the words uttered by Lincoln in the presence of these persons in his last hour, that his great heart held nothing but kindness and good will toward all his countrymen..."

Representative Rathbone did not allude to what did not fit—the unseemly fact that the historical accident which helped make his political career had also destroyed his parents' lives. On Christmas Eve, 1883, while the future congressman

slept nearby, his father murdered his mother, in part, it was said, because his mind had been destroyed by years of hearing whispers about how he could have done something more to save the president. Rathbone would spend the rest of his life, until 1911, in an insane asylum, and the whereabouts of Clara Rathbone's bloody dress—not what she wore the day of her own murder, but the gown she had on at Ford's—would remain the subject of inquiry, legend and fiction.

The Lincoln family may also have tried to keep elements that didn't "fit" from being inserted into the legend—or even into the box of relics presented to the Library by Mrs. Isham in 1937. For years, historians have heard rumors that another object Lincoln had in his pockets on the night he was killed—a small pistol he carried to calm his wife's fears for his safety—was deliberately excluded from the gift, lest the firearm somehow detract from the legend of the martyred president.

THESE ARE WEAPONS ENOUGH IN THE FORD'S Theatre museum. Booth's derringer is behind glass, along with the knife he plunged into Henry Rathbone. ("AMERICA—LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE—THE LAND OF THE FREE AND HOME OF THE BRAVE" is the inscription on the dagger.)

Rathbone's white gloves—no doubt, like Lincoln's, balled up in his pockets, and probably the only item of his clothing not to be drenched with his blood—are laid out nearby, somehow more frightening for their pristine condition. A visitor can also see Lincoln's overcoat; a fragment of the wallpaper in the state box; a piece of the theater curtain; and mourning tassels cut from the catafalque that bore the president's coffin. For years after the assassination, the grief-stricken and the curious had to *have* something. The Louis Schade family, who acquired the Petersen house on 10th Street from its original owner, sold it to the United States government in 1896, after years of trying to escape relic hunters. Today, as the House Where Lincoln Died, it is administered with Ford's Theatre by the National Park Service. The curators had wanted to exhibit the contents of Lincoln's pockets on their own site instead of at the Library. In medieval times, monastic competition for relics gave rise to complicated thefts and "translations"; in our own day, the Library has arranged an unprecedented loan of the items, which are temporarily on display where they last were 130 years ago.

The Washington tourist who comes to Ford's or the Library may also make a stop at Political Americana, a memorabilia shop that thrives a few blocks from the White House. Buttons, stickpins, fans, pennants, sheet music: American attics are full of them, and what isn't handed down can be purchased. *Hake's Guide to Presidential Campaign Collectibles* lists a Nixon key chain for \$15, a McKinley ribbon for \$40, and a 1 1/8-inch copper Lincoln medal from the 1860 campaign, its reverse depicting the "Rail Splitter of the West," for a surprisingly low \$65. But that is the difference between the piece of mere memorabilia and the relic. One is a deliberate artifact, mass-produced and slightly vicarious in feeling; the other is minted by accident, usually catastrophe and blood. One takes the curatorial term "ephemera"; the other belongs to the ages. □



American Treasures of the Library of Congress: MEMORY



Artifacts of Assassination

When Abraham Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865, he was carrying two pairs of spectacles and a lens polisher, a pocketknife, a watch fob, a linen handkerchief, and a brown leather wallet containing a five-dollar Confederate note and nine newspaper clippings, including several favorable to the president and his policies. Given to his son Robert Todd upon Lincoln's death, these everyday items, which through association with tragedy had become like relics, were kept in the Lincoln family for more than seventy years. They came to the Library in 1937 as part of the gift from Lincoln's granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Isham, whose gift included several books and daguerreotypes, a silver inkstand, and Mary Todd Lincoln's seed-pearl necklace and matching bracelets.

It is quite unusual for the Library to keep personal artifacts among its holdings, and they were not put on display until 1976, when then Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin thought their exposure would humanize a man who had become "mythologically engulfed." But the availability of these artifacts has only piqued interest in the Lincoln myth--the contents of Lincoln's pockets are among the items visitors to the Library most often ask to see.

New York Times, vol. XIV, no. 4236 (April 15, 1865)

[Lincoln realia, 1865](#)

[Lincoln realia, 1865, Lincoln's reading glasses](#)

[Rare Book & Special Collections Division](#)

One of the most complete representations of conspiracy literature as well as newspaper accounts of the assassination, like that in the *New York Times* pictured here, was assembled by Alfred Whital Stern. The most extensive collection of Lincolniana ever assembled by a private individual, Stern's important gift to the Library in 1953 included books, broadsides, paintings, photographs, medals, manuscripts, and memorabilia.

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